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*The Christian's Duty in a time of publick
Danger.*

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED at

C H E S H U N T

In the

County of *H E R T F O R D*,

February 6, 1756.

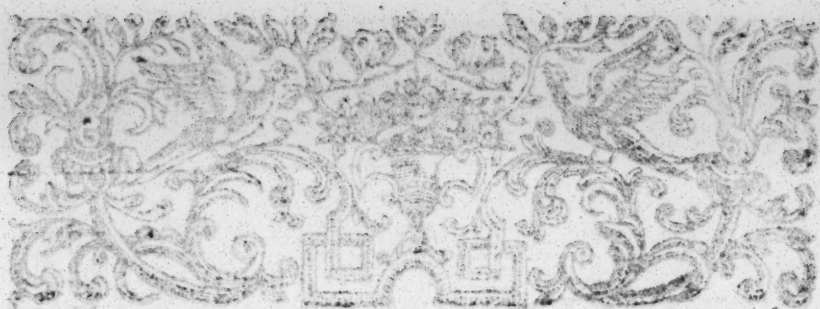
Being the Day appointed for a publick and
general Fast and Humiliation, to be observed
throughout the Kingdom.

By *JOHN MASON, A. M.*

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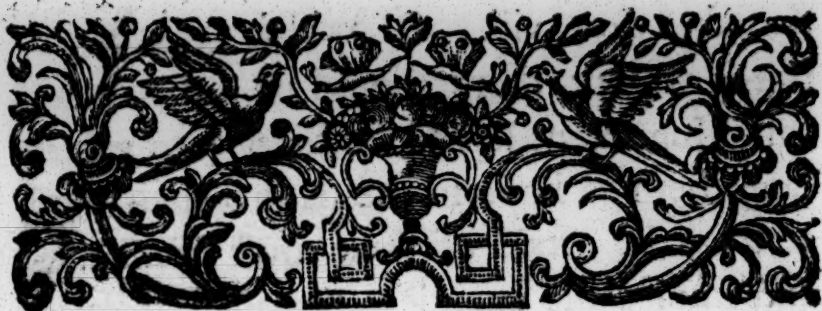
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Psalm xlv. 10.

Be still and know that I am God.

THESE words, which are so
important in every
age, are of David and King
David's, who was a prince of
peace. These words are
not a thought to be forgotten, but
a warning to the people of God, who
shall be able to stand against their
enemies, and shall be able to
stand from the preceding verses, which express
the Psalmist's pious joy and triumph in
God, after some signal Deliverance from
his powerful enemies. Which may pos-
sibly refer to his Conduct over those men-
tioned.



PSALM xlv. 10.

Be still, and know that I am GOD.

HESE Words direct us to a very important Duty in every day of Distress and Danger, whether publick or private. Their original reference indeed is thought to be somewhat different: as respecting the Enemies of God's people; whose hostile attempts against them his Providence had remarkably defeated; as appears from the preceding verses, which express the *Psalmist's* pious Joy and Triumph in God, after some signal Deliverance from his powerful Enemies. Which may possibly refer to his Conquest over those men-

tioned 2 *Sam.* viii. Of which great Victories it was fit there should be some thankful Monument left to Posterity ; to encourage them to hope in the LORD their God, and not be afraid of their most determined and implacable enemies, provided they adhered faithfully to him and their Duty. Come (says he) *behold the works of the LORD, what Desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh Wars to cease to the ends of the earth : he breaketh the Bow, and cutteth the Spear in sunder, he burneth the chariot in the fire.* ver. 8, 9. And then by a sudden and elegant *Apostrophe* and Address to the Enemies of GOD's people among whom those Desolations were made, he introduces God himself speaking to them in the Words of the text, *Be still, and know that I am GOD : I will be exalted among the Heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.* that is, ' learn
 ' to be quiet for the future ; and remember
 ' from hence that GOD maintaineth the
 ' cause of his own people ; and that the
 ' most high will fight for them, and deliver
 ' them from the hands of those who rise
 ' up against them.' Thus Bishop *Patrick* glosses the Words.

How-

a time of publick Danger. 5

However, I think they are with equal beauty and propriety capable of a different application; by supposing that they are addressed to the people of God themselves, for whom he had wrought out the Deliverances before mentioned; as an Admonition and Direction to them how to behave hereafter under any such like Distress and Danger. *Be still, and know that I am GOD.* i. e. 'Be not anxiously fearful, or
' too much terrified at the prospect of the
' strength and number of your Enemies:
' for be assured that I, who have done such
' great things for you already, will continue to defend you against them; you have
' only to trust in, and commit your cause to
' me, *who will be exalted among the Heathen,*
' *who will be exalted in the Earth.*

This sense of the Words appears to me the more natural, and is therefore what I shall fix upon: especially as it is most suitable to the occasion of our present Solemnity; and immediately points out to us our Duty in a day of Danger, and under the prospect of publick calamities; that is, to keep our Spirits peaceable and composed, devoutly to acknowledge the hand of God therein, and
leave

leave Events with him. *Be still, and know that I am GOD.*

Such an Exhortation cannot be thought unseasonable in the present Conjunction. *The Judgments of GOD are visibly abroad in the Earth.* Dreadful and beyond all Example have been the late Convulsions in the natural world. The violent and long-continued ferments and concussion of the Elements (not to be parallell'd in any History) and the wide-spreading devastations in which they have involved the Kingdoms of *Portugal, Spain, and Morocco*, have justly spread a terror throughout all *Europe*. And every nation which the Almighty's Hand hath spared, at this dismal Spectacle stands aghast and trembling (like the few tottering Buildings left at *Lisbon*) expecting every day that the next Shock will lay them on a Level with the Ruin of their Neighbours. We cannot without Amazement and Horror *behold the Works of the LORD, and the Desolations he hath already made in the earth.* Great God! *our flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and we are afraid of thy Judgments (a).*

This

a time of publick Danger. 7

This nation hath been long threaten'd with a complicated Calamity; and is so still. Our restless and ambitious Enemies were no sooner forced by Providence to submit to terms of accommodation at the End of the late War, but they began immediately to strengthen and augment their Navy, which they then found too weak; and have made use of the last ten years Respite, to put themselves into a condition of executing the pernicious Project they had long been concerting; *viz.* to undermine the very foundation of our national Strength and Wealth, by confining and intimidating our Settlements, and ruining our Trade, in *North America*. A Scheme which they had gradually carried on year after year so far, that it became absolutely necessary at length to exert our utmost Efforts to oppose and defeat it. The consequence of which was, that those vigorous measures (tho' taken only for self-preservation) have fir'd our Enemies with the most determin'd and implacable Rage and Vengeance: which is like to involve us in a very burdensome, bloody and destructive War.

This

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This is our Situation, and this our Danger. But here is our Hope and Safety; a righteous, wise, almighty Power governs all; 'rides in the Whirlwind and directs the Storm.' Let us therefore *be still and know that he is GOD.*

In these Words we have two Duties commanded, peculiarly incumbent on the people of God in a Day of publick Danger; and which are mutually subservient to each other. The first is *to be still*; and the second contained in those words, *know that I am GOD.*—I shall therefore

I. Particularly open and explain to you each of these Duties distinctly.

II. Shew you the connexion there is between them; or how naturally they subserve and promote each other.

(*Lastly*) Conclude with an application of them suitable to the present circumstances of the nation.

I. I am to open and explain to you each of these Duties distinctly. And

I. The

a time of publick Danger. 9

i. The first thing incumbent on the people of God in a time of publick danger is, *to be still* *.

Now this does not require us to be insensible to publick danger and calamities ; to shut our eyes against the prospect of approaching Evils, or stop our Ears against the Threatenings of Divine Providence. On the contrary, 'tis our Duty and Wisdom to apprehend them, that we may take the Warning ; to foresee them in order to provide against them ; and to expect them, that we may be better prepar'd to meet and improve them.—We may observe in some a kind of fixed peace and quietness of mind arising from Indolence, or a natural Inadvertence of the mind to evil Events ; which do not affect them tho' ever so great or near. This is not Wisdom but Weakness. And the Royal Preacher tells us more than once, that *the prudent man foreseeth the evil,*
B and

* The original word (רָפָה from הִרְפּוּ) properly signifies to remit, abate, or cease. So that the Expression is plainly *elliptical*. q. d. Cease your Sorrows, abate your Complaints, away with all your tumultuous Fears, &c. which therefore our Translators have very justly and comprehensively render'd, *be still*.

and hideth himself, but the Simple pass on and are punished (b).

Nor does the Precept in the text require us to be unaffected at the apprehension of threaten'd Evils. As we are not to shut our Eyes, so neither should we harden our Hearts against them. How passionately did *Jeremiah* (the weeping Prophet) lament over his nation, when he foresaw the Calamities that were coming upon it! His Heart dissolves in Sorrow, *O, that my head were Waters and my Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I may weep day and night for the slain of the Daughter of my people (c)* It shews a narrow Spirit as well as a very weak Mind, to be altogether unconcerned at publick Sufferings. Some seem to think an Evil to be less grievous because it is general. But how poor a consolation would it have been to such, had they been at *Lisbon* or *Mequinez* during the late Earthquakes, to think that, tho' they were totally ruined as to this World, yet many thousands were ruined with them? this to a human Heart would give the greater Horror. So that to be unaffected with publick Evils and Dan-
gers

(b) *Prov.* xxii. 3. xxvii. 12. (c) *Jer.* ix. 1.

a time of publick Danger. II

gers purely because they are publick, shews not only a stupid and thoughtless, but a sort of inhuman temper.

Nor (*lastly*) are we required in these words to be indolent and inactive in a time of publick danger. They do not justify our negligence, or our refusal to do all we can to prevent or lessen or remove the threatened calamity; or to support ourselves under it in the best manner we are able. To *be still* does not mean to sit still and do nothing, if we are able to do any thing. Every one must do his part, as well as bear his part, in a time of publick Trouble: and tho' it be but a small part, perhaps, that we are able to do, yet we should not be backward to do that.

But in short, the meaning of the precept is, that we should maintain a Self-possession and Presence of mind, a Peace and Quietness of spirit, under a prospect of the greatest temporal Adversity; from a firm belief of, and dependance upon the Wisdom and Righteousness of the supreme Judge and Governor of the World. — And this Quietness of Mind may here stand opposed

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(1.) To a *restless* and *factious* spirit; a prevailing Discontent and Petulance of mind; which puts men upon seeking Relief sometimes by unlikely, and often by unlawful means: which shews great Distrust of God, and great Impatience under the Afflictions he sends. A man of such a temper seldom looks any further than the Instrument; and (forgetting the hand that moves it) is very ready to censure the Conduct of his Superiors, when things go (as he thinks) wrong. And when any publick Evil happens (tho' it be purely providential and unavoidable) the Person or Persons at the Helm, whom he happens to dislike, must be wrong in every Measure, and the Author of every Calamity we suffer. Such a factious Spirit is very contrary to the quiet temper recommended in the Text; and hath been the Source of great mischief and disorder in this Kingdom.

(2.) What is required and recommended in the text stands likewise in opposition to a *querulous* and *murmuring* temper; which renders a man fretful and peevish under his share of Suffering; and inclines him to *charge* not only Man but *GOD foolishly*:
as

as if his Ways were not equal, nor his Judgments according to truth and righteousness. There is no less Impatience and Impiety in such a temper, than there is Pride and Self-conceit in that before mentioned: and both of them (like that Viper in the Bosom, Envy) turn their own sting into the Breast that harbours them.

(3.) This Quietness of mind commanded in the text may further stand opposed to an *over anxious* and *terrified* spirit: which makes the prospect of publick Dangers affect us too much, and overcharge and almost overwhelm our minds. Such a timorous temper we should guard against, because it not only brings a needless distress upon our spirits, but unfits us for the Duties peculiarly incumbent upon us in such a situation; and both anticipates and increases the Evil we fear; gives us to feel it before it comes, and makes it greater when it does.

(*Lastly*) The Command in the text stands likewise opposed to a *wild, dissipated* and *tumultuous* frame of mind. As, for instance, when persons are struck with amazement and horror at the sight of any sudden, unsuspect-

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suspected Evil ; which so siezeth their spirits as to render them incapable of thinking or judging what is best, or of doing it when it is known. Such a discomposure of mind, perhaps, some persons of weak spirits cannot prevent, under certain awful and alarming Events : However, 'tis contrary to that peace and quietness of mind the text recommends ; and therefore both Duty and Interest should engage them to strive against it.

In short what the Psalmist here means is, that under a prospect or apprehension of any threaten'd Evil or Calamity, publick or private, the first thing we are to take care of is, to guard our passions, keep our spirits composed, and maintain a government and possession of our Tempers ; which will best fit us for the Duties immediately necessary under such Providences ; and dispose us to make the best Improvement of them : in opposition to a *careless, unaffected, indolent* temper, on the one hand ; and a *factionous, fretful, fearful, and tumultuous* temper, on the other.

So much for the first Duty recommended in the text, *be still*.

2. Let

2. Let us now consider what is contained in the other ; expressed in those Words, *and know that I am GOD.*

This is one of those Scripture forms of speech in which there is much more implied than expressed. And the three following things are plainly comprehended in the Exhortation.

(1.) That we should *acknowledge* and *seriously consider* GOD as the great *Superintendent* over all these things*. That He interests and concerns himself in all the publick Transactions of the world ; and especially in all those calamitous Events which befall any particular nation. In this sense we may gloss those words of the prophet, *Amos iii. 6. Shall there be Evil in a City, and the LORD hath not done it ?* We are too apt both in prosperity and adversity to confine our views to second Causes ; or the Instruments GOD is pleased to make use of either

* In this Sense the original Word (יָדָע) is very frequently used. See *Psal. ix. 20. put them in fear, O LORD, that the nations may know* (i. e. may consider and acknowledge) *themselves to be but men.* *Psa. xxxix. 4. that I may know* (i. e. seriously consider) *how frail I am.* see also *Psal. lxxxiii. 18. Hos. ii. 8. vii. 9.* and all those places where it is said, *ye shall know that I am the LORD.*

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either to comfort or chastise us : acting, in the former case, like the *Persians* who adore the Sun that warms them ; and in the latter, like the Dog that bites the stone that strikes him.

The phrase, *know that I am GOD*, plainly implies, that he who is the Creator must be the Governor of the World. This consequence is so natural and evident, that it is here taken for granted ; and thus affects the mind more strongly than if it were directly expressed. As if it were said, ‘ do you not
‘ know that I am the only true God, who
‘ made the World, and all mankind that
‘ dwell on the face of the Earth ? and do
‘ you not know that I govern the world
‘ which I have made ? away then with all
‘ anxious, fearful, and distrustful Thoughts.
‘ *Be still, and only know that I am GOD ;*
‘ that all things are under my Management
‘ and Direction, and leave to me the Government of my own world.’

Not the smallest Event befalls us (our Saviour saith) without the Direction of our heavenly Father ; the greater Events then must certainly be under his Conduct, with every circumstance belonging thereunto.

And

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And this we should always remember and readily *acknowledge*. Therefore

(2.) Another thing implied in the Exhortation is, that we should particularly and devoutly eye the Hand of God in all remarkable Events of a *publick nature*. It is not enough in general to acknowledge the government of Divine Providence, but we should seriously recognize the *particular* Instances of providential Interposition, and endeavour to improve them to pious purposes.

GOD is known by the Judgments which he executeth. And his Providence sometimes proclaims his Truth and Righteousness, as loudly as his Works do his Power and Wisdom. He calls us therefore to great attention in such cases. *Come behold the Works of the LORD; what Desolations he hath made in the Earth.* He is the Author of them. And it is he also that *maketh Wars to cease unto the ends of the Earth; he breaketh the Bow and cutteth the Spear in sunder, and burneth the Chariots in the fire:* as it is in the verses immediately preceding the text.

—Don't let us say then, 'What a lucky Turn is there? what an unfortunate Event was that?' For why should we thus affect

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fect to banish GOD out of his own World (who directs every thing in it) and ascribe the government of it to Chance and Fortune? that is, to we know not what. It is a more christian and becoming language, 'What a Mercy is there? what an awful Providence was that?' and thus to acknowledge GOD as superintendant over all; whose power restrains the wrath of man, and often turns it to his Praise.

(3.) Another thing implied in the precept, *know that I am GOD*, is that we should peaceably *depend* upon his protection in a way of Duty; in full confidence that he will take care of his own cause and people. So that it is not a mere speculative but a practical thing that is here commanded. It implies a committing our ways unto the LORD, and devolving our cares upon him, in a firm assurance that under the wise conduct of his Providence all things will at length issue well. *His Ways* may indeed be *in the deep waters*; that is, his Footsteps unseen, and the traces of his Wisdom, Righteousness and Mercy be undiscernable; an impenetrable Darkness may involve the external Scenes of his Government: But all
this

this only argues our Weakness, not his want of Wisdom. It all results from and resolves into this, 'that he seeth not as we do, and 'that his ways are not as ours.' And therefore 'tis our Duty to *be still, and know that he is G O D.*

Having thus opened to you the Import of the two precepts contained in the text, I am now

II. To shew you the Connexion there is between them. And

1. The Duty required in the former part of the Words is very necessary to dispose us to that commanded in the latter. For that calm, quiet, steady, dispassionate, and even temper of mind, recommended in those words *be still*, is that which will best prepare and fit us devoutly and seriously to acknowledge the Hand of God, and to depend upon his Care and Providence at all times. When the Mind is distracted with Fears, disturb'd by Passion, or chaf'd with Discontent, it is neither disposed to acknowledge God, nor trust him. It is the quiet and peaceable Mind that makes those Reflections

on the ways and providences of God, which will be its best support and comfort in a day of general Calamity.

2. The latter Duty is no less subservient to the former. • And this pious and humble acknowledgement of the hand of God in all adverse and disastrous Events implied in those words, *know that I am GOD*, is a proper means to pacify and quiet our spirits, and give us that composure and steadiness of mind required in the first Clause, *be still*. And I know not a more effectual Expedient to calm a ruffled spirit, than thus to raise the Thoughts to the first Mover; from whom originally come all the Changes we see in the world, of whatever nature, or whatever Instruments he is pleased to use in bringing them about. In every calamitous circumstance of Life then, whether publick or private, let us say with good old *Eli*, *It is the LORD*; *let him do what seemeth him good* (d). This will quiet our passions, and take off the keenness of our Resentment against men by whose Folly, Treachery, or Wickedness we suffer.

It

(d) 1 Sam. iii. 18.

a time of publick Danger. 21

It was the same Thought which gave Job support under his accumulated Troubles, *Shall I receive Good at the hand of the LORD, and shall I not receive Evil(e)?* He acknowledged that he received both from him. And it is observable that there is no Motive used more frequently in the Old Testament to enforce Obedience and Submission to the Will of God than this, *I am the LORD, or know that I am the LORD.*

So that the two precepts in the text, you see, stand in a very close and natural connexion, and mutually enforce, assist, and recommend each other. *Be still, and know that I am GOD,* is the same as if it was said, *know that I am GOD, and be still.* In the former disposition of the Words the precept is, ‘possess your minds with that
‘composure and peace which will best dis-
‘pose you to acknowledge and submit to
‘my providential Will.’ In the latter it is,
‘own my Hand and yield to my Govern-
‘ment, and that will calm your spirits and
‘establish your peace of mind under all the
‘most dark and afflicting circumstances of
‘Life.’—It remains now

III. To

(e) Job xi. 10.

III. To apply these two precepts to ourselves; as what peculiarly concern us, in the present dangerous situation of our publick Affairs.

GOD hath been pleased for these several years to hold his Rod over this nation, with which he hath severely scourged some others on the Continent. The Warnings he hath given us have been long and loud: and he now waits for our repentance and Reformation to avert the impending Blow. In which situation nothing can be more reasonable than this Day's Solemnity of publick Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer, to be observed throughout the whole Island: which we are now assembled together to keep in the most religious and solemn manner; induced hereto no less by the Call of Providence than by that of publick Authority.

With regard to the publick Calamities that threaten us, our Duty as private Christians has been particularly explained. Our Danger is great, and we know not how soon our Distress may be as great as our present Danger.

ger.—In the mean time, let us not despise or overlook it: or affect to lessen and laugh at it, as some men, not very well affected either to God, their King, or their Country, seem inclined to do. We may, and we ought to be impressed by it; and we cannot fail to be so, if we are rightly sensible of the Evils we are threatened with; or what would be the Consequence, if it should please God for our Sins to permit our Enemies but once to accomplish their Design: who will at once strip us of all our civil and religious Liberties, and every thing that is dear to us as *Britons* and *Protestants*. And let us not be over confident that there is no Danger of this. The Danger may be greater and nearer than we apprehend. This I am sure of, that Providence hath often brought about more unlikely Events in our Favour: and therefore can, if he think fit, easily and suddenly bring about this for our punishment. And 'tis no less certain that the great and repeated Provocations we have given him are more than enough to justify such apprehensions.

But then as we are not to be indifferent, so neither ought we to be indolent or unactive.

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active. It is not much indeed that we can do towards the publick Safety in a time of publick Danger. But something we may. We may chearfully bear our Share of the Burden which the calamities of the Times necessarily lay upon the Subject.—We may strengthen the Hands of our Rulers by discovering and promoting a spirit of Loyalty, Subjection and Peace; and by our Influence and Example may discountenance every thing that looks like an ungrateful, discontented and factious spirit, under a mild and merciful, a legal and protestant Government: that spirit which (propagated by the malice and artifice of some, and imbibed by the folly and rashness of others) brought us not long since to the very Brink of Ruin.—And especially may we do a publick Service to the nation by our Prayers; which, if they be unfeigned and fervent, may go a good way towards averting the publick Calamities we fear: or however will best prepare us to meet them.

And then when we have done this, we are to *be still*; preserve a Self-possession and Steadiness of mind, amidst all the Feuds, Heats, Animosities and Tumult of the times; keep
our

our tempers quiet and composed in the general Hurry and Consternation ; dispassionate and cool amidst all the Brigues and Bitterness which men of different Sentiments and Parties express against each other ; sedate, calm, and untterrified, under the Symptoms of approaching Distress, and the Judgments of God that threaten us : which will best dispose us to *know that he is GOD.*

Which brings me to the application of the other Branch of Duty that has now been inculcated. *viz.* to acknowledge God to be the first Mover of all the Changes we see or hear of, either at home or abroad ; and to keep our Dependence supremely upon him.—It is not the Ambition of *this* Prince, or the Avarice of *that*, which puts all these Wheels first into Motion. There is a Cause to be contemplated beyond all this, *viz.* the agency of the *King of Kings* ; who curbs or lets loose the Pride and Passions of earthly Potentates to accomplish his great and wise Designs ; in whose *hands are the hearts of Kings, and who, as the Rivers of Waters, turneth them whithersoever he will (f).*

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So

(f) Prov. xxi. 1.

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So much in general.—But more particularly should we eye the hand of Providence in every signal Turn or remarkable Circumstance either one way or other, during the present Commotions ; and especially as they are favourable or threatening to the Interest of this nation. And if we take a general and just view of the present Situation of our publick Affairs, we may easily see some circumstances very much in our favour ; and others which (it must be own'd) bear a very threatening Aspect. In both which the hand of God is to be religiously acknowledged, to excite at once our humble Gratitude, and a constant firm dependance on that Almighty Providence, which alone is able to save or to destroy.

The circumstances that at present appear in our favour are such as these.—Our Cause is just, and good. And if we are forc'd into a War, it is on our part purely *defensive* : and in support of the faith of Treaties and our own undoubted national Rights, in opposition to the all-grasping Ambition of a perfidious and potent Enemy, who in violation of the *one* hath injuriously invaded the *other*. An Enemy whom

a time of publick Danger. 27

no Treaty binds, no Laws restrain, no Equity governs: who after commencing open Hostilities in a time of profound peace, loudly complains of the necessary measures we have been obliged to take to do ourselves justice.

Again, what a mercy it is that our *Sovereign's* Life and Health are preserved in the present dangerous *Crisis*! on whose Conduct, Experience, Equity, Moderation, Magnanimity and Wisdom we may depend, under Providence, in hope (if it shall please God to spare his important Life) to see our tranquility again restored.

Another circumstance which I cannot but take notice of in our favour is, the happy unanimity between the King and his Parliament; and that our Senate is animated with so true and seasonable a zeal for the just Rights and Liberties of the nation: and that the noisy efforts of Faction, and of those who labour to divide us, are so feeble, fruitless and ineffectual.

Again, 'tis a favourable providence on our side, that the several Courts of *Europe*, awakened by the well known perfidy and ambition of our Enemy, are so backward

to join his Interest and support his measures; that he finds it so difficult to strengthen himself by his wonted Alliances on the Continent: and that the vigorous measures we have used could not be taken at a time when we could have greater Hope of foreign Supports, or our Enemy less. A circumstance which I cannot but think does honour to the penetration of the Government, and the wisdom of it's Negotiations.

Again, the unanimity and universal consent of all Parties among us in approving the vigorous measures that have been taken is another circumstance in our favour. That notwithstanding the heavy burden of the national Debt, and what we have suffered by the late reduction of publick Interest, all agree that since a war with *France* is at length become unavoidable, it ought to be enter'd upon with all possible vigour: from this prudent and political Maxim, 'that it is better to risque a part than lose the whole.'

(*Lastly*) 'Tis a favourable circumstance that our naval and military Preparations have been conducted with so much expedition and success: that the nation instantly took the Alarm, and put itself so suddenly into a posture

posture of Defence, to defeat the Design and repel the Invasions of our faithless and insidious Adversaries.

These are all circumstances very much in our favour: which when we think of we should be thankful to that Providence which presides over, and conducts the whole.

But then there are other circumstances which, it must be owned are dark and discouraging, and which ought to keep us still humble and dependant.

Our Enemies are, without doubt, very strong and powerful: irritated to the utmost and most determin'd Vengeance. And what Cruelty as well as Falshood they are capable of, we need no proof.

Our Provinces in North *America* are at present in a very dangerous and distressed condition: and especially the back Settlements which lie most exposed to the inhuman barbarities and ravages of the French *Indians*.

Again, how many Enemies hath our Country in it's very Bowels! who, tho' at present they lie concealed and quiet, yet in case of
an

an Invasion or any desperate Emergency, are capable of doing us unknown Mischief.

Again, what dependance can we have on a Life advanced to *seventy-three* Years of age? And should it please God to take off the King at this time, what have we not to apprehend from a Minority in the present dangerous conjuncture!

I will only add, we have severely felt the consequences of the late Earthquakes at *Lisbon*; and know not how soon the like calamity may befall us: for no natural reason can be assigned why it did not befall us rather than them. Sure I am, we have much more reason to apprehend it *now* than they had *then*. And if we do not take the Warning and improve it, the calamity may be doubled upon us.

And if to all this we add our national Profaneness and Impiety, the general Dissoluteness of manners, and that predominant Love of Pleasures (low, sensual, mean, unmanly Pleasures) that so much infects, effeminates and distinguishes the present Age, we have reason to say that our danger is not small. These things call aloud for Repentance, Humiliation and Prayer: and should
awaken

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awaken in us a humble sense of our dependance on Providence, and great Thankfulness that we are yet preserved.

Whilst we thus acknowledge the Providence of God then, we should depend upon it, in full confidence that he will take care of his own cause. He does all things well and wisely; and can soon bring Light out of Darkness, Order out of Confusion, and Good out of Evil.

In this manner let us prepare to meet all the Events and Occurrences of the present year. We know not what it may produce; nor what are the Designs of Providence; but we know what is our Duty; and that is all that concerns us. Let us only be found faithful to *that*, and leave to God the government of his own World.

I shall conclude all with observing, that the past Providences of God strongly enforce the Exhortations of his Word; and especially that which has now been given us. And the many wonderful and extraordinary Interpositions of the Divine Hand, for the preservation of our civil and religious Liberties, against those who sought to deprive us of them, *in the Beginning, Middle,*
and

and latter *End* of the last Century ; and in the *Beginning* and *Middle* of this ; these publick Deliverances, I say, (which we should never forget) powerfully enforce the Duty which has now been recommended, of a calm and placid Trust in the same Almighty Saviour ; who by these is loudly calling upon us, under every publick Distress and Danger, in the Words of the text, —BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.

F I N I S.

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